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(14) Agricultural loans should be granted to the ryots at reduced rates of interest.

(15) An economic and agricultural survey of the State should be conducted.

(16) The Forest, Revenue and Irrigation Departments should act in consultation with one another and help the ryots in their legitimate wants.

(17) A committee should be formed to enquire into the present condition of agriculture in the State and advise on measures for its development.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

53. Agriculture in South Travancore.

Mr. A. M. Kumara Pillai, B. A. & B. L. (Member, T. I. C., Nagercoil) dwelt at length on the present depressed condition of the agriculturists of South Travancore. He regretted to observe that, in G. O. No. 12861/L. R. & F., dated the 1st December 1912, the Government had again decided that they would not change the dates of opening and closing the Kodayar Reservoir. The ryots felt that it was a matter in which the Government could afford to give some relief to them, for, even when water was available in the Reservoir, it was hard that it could not be let out for cultivation at a time when it was most urgently wanted. It was well-known that the agricultural operations in South Travancore usually commenced with the first rains towards the close of Meenam, and they would be complete by the middle of Medam. It was about that time that the ryots felt the need of water, and if there were no rains, which was often the case, the crops withered away to their great loss. The Government had not much to lose by letting out water by that time, for, with the burst of the monsoons, the Reservoir would get filled again. If the Government persisted in not changing the date, the ryots had no alternative but to sow *kochu vithu* (tender seeds), which could be commenced later on with the Kodayar water and harvested before the next cultivation season. But the great disadvantage was that the *kochu vithu* would yield only fourfold crops as against twenty-folds obtained from the other seeds. It was in view of those difficulties that he made bold to bring the subject again so soon after the latest decision of the Government, and he earnestly requested that the Government might be pleased to allow 15 days more either at the beginning or at the close, preferably the former, and fix the 1st Edavam as the date of opening the Reservoir.

He next said that the breathless hurry with which the tank-beds in South Travancore were sold away was highly prejudicial to the interests of agriculture. With the first rains, the tank-beds were helpful to the ryots in conserving some water which might be made use of later on. In times of drought, even a small quantity of water sufficient for two or three days' watering was invaluable to put off, if not avert, the failure of crops. In times of floods those tank-beds served to prevent heavy breaches, and that was the reason why South Travancore was able to withstand even the heaviest monsoons in the past. During the last two years, several breaches occurred which, but for the timely action of the Public Works

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authorities, might have washed away villages, and the Government thereby incurred a loss of over a lakh of rupees. Another point to be considered was the purpose the tank-beds served to the starving cattle. It was a painful sight to witness the grassy tank-beds like the Sabhayarkulam being thoughtlessly sold away without any regard to the interests of the cultivators. The Kodayar Project itself was in its experimental stage, and, before its success was assured, it was undesirable to sell away all the tank-beds. They were at the disposal of the Government and could be sold at any time. He therefore requested that a careful enquiry might be made whether, on a consideration of the interests of the Government and of the ryots, it was necessary or advantageous to dispose of the tank-beds immediately.

Mr. M. Arumukhaperumal Pillai (Member, Agastiswaram taluk) said that more than 5 lakhs of acres of land or more than 50 per cent of the cultivable area of the State were under paddy cultivation. It was therefore to be regretted that in 1087 the Agricultural Department was handicapped in carrying out experiments with paddy, the most important crop in the State, on account of the absence of a special paddy farm. That was a serious drawback which called for the immediate attention of the Government. Also, there were not experimental farms in the most important centres of agriculture, for example, Nanjanad. The experimental farms in the vicinity would improve the methods of cultivation and give sufficient scope for the cultivation of new seeds which might be found suited to local conditions.

The Member therefore suggested, for the consideration of the Government, the following measures for the development of agriculture in South Travancore :—

(1) The opening of two or more agricultural, demonstration and experimental farms in Nanjanad in which, among others, experiments in paddy cultivation should be tried.

(2) The opening of a seed farm at Nagercoil for selecting paddy seeds under scientific supervision and for distributing them among the ryots.

(3) The opening of agricultural schools attached to the various experimental farms and to train the sons of the ryots.

(4) The opening of demonstration farms to give instruction to the ryots in the use of agricultural implements. In this connection he said that the weed called "Ooray" could be completely destroyed only by means of seed-drills, the use of which was not known to the ryots.

(5) The holding of agricultural exhibitions every year. It was a serious drawback that no exhibition was being held by the State annually.

(6) The opening of village agricultural banks in important villages. As the people were illiterate, the Member proposed that the Government should take the initiative.

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(7) The distribution of pamphlets by the Agricultural Department containing the results of experiments with paddy.

(8) The improving of the breed of cattle by the organisation of cattle shows and by improving the work of the Veterinary officers.

(9) The provision of grazing grounds for cattle in the reserved forests.

(10) The construction of good roads for the transport of manure. The Member said that the road from Thazhakudi to Veeranamangalam on the banks of the Palayar should be connected with the main road from Nagercoil to Thittivila to facilitate the transport of manure from Aramboly.

(11) The establishment of a depot for chemical manures at Nagercoil to supply the people in Nanjanad.

Mr. M. Sivathanu Pillai (Member, Agastiswaram taluk) agreed with what the other Members said on the subject and added that, for both the crops together, South Travancore required 310 days' irrigation. In any case, it could not go below 285 days and he prayed that the Reservoir might be opened on the 15th Medam every year. He also suggested the desirability of forming an Irrigation Board to see to the timely and efficient distribution of the Kodayar water.

The next point mentioned by him was about the need for maintaining and improving the two miles of road from Parakkay to Thamarakulam. The question of maintaining that road had been under consideration since 1076, but nothing was done till now. As the road was of great importance to the agriculturists, he requested that immediate action be taken to put the road in order.

The Member next referred to the circumstance that constant breaches occurred owing to the existence of the Mission dam. He regretted that there had never been an impartial effort on the part of the officers to trace the cause of those breaches to the existence of the Mission dam. The Government spent about Rs. 5,000 annually to improve the breaches. He said that, if that dam were completely removed, the recurring loss to the Government and the great havoc done to several acres of land in the neighbourhood could both be saved.

He then advocated the necessity for ascertaining the requirements of South Travancore in the matter of grazing grounds through a committee and the early reservation of sufficient grounds for the purpose.

Lastly, the Member represented that there were several encroachments on the road from Suchindram to the Manakudi lake. Some lands had also been registered as *puduval* and a few leased out on *kuthagapattom* to the ryots. He requested early orders to the Revenue Department to remove the encroachments and secure a uniform width throughout the distance even by acquiring small patches of land wherever necessary.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

54. The need for Government aid in respect of agriculture.

Mr. Kochukunju Kurup (Member, Kunnathur taluk) suggested the following means for the amelioration of the depressed condition of the agriculturists :—

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